



West Lothian Housing Partnership (SC188968)

MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

held by videoconference

on Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 14.00

Directors present: John Hill (Chair), Lesley Bloomer, Judith MacGlashan and Mairi Martin

In attendance: Olga Clayton (Group Director of Housing and Care), Stephen Wright (Deputy Group Company Secretary), Lynsey Fotheringham (Head of Housing), Morgan Kingston (Finance Manager) and Nicola McQuiston (Letting and Homelessness Lead) (item 5), Emma Thomson (Head of Care – East) (item 6), Jennifer Anderson (Group Protection Liaison Manager) (item 7), Kirsty Connelly (Senior Assurance Co-ordinator) (item12)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Gregor Dunlay.

It was noted that we continued to operate with a reduced Board due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. Board members who were not attending the meeting had considered the reports and provided feedback to the Chair during an earlier discussion.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the standing declarations of interest. There were no new declarations.

3. Minutes of Board Meeting held on 17 February 2021 and matters arising

Decided: The Board approved the minute of the meeting held on 17 February 2021.

Matters arising:

- Update on health and wellbeing to be provided to next meeting
- Confirmed that we have less than 20 customers with no access to a bank account

4. Business update

The Board received an update on our response to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on our services, customers and communities. The Board considered the update and the plans to re-mobilise our services when restrictions allow. The Board considered the impact of the pandemic on staff and customers and considered the ways in which we are supporting both including our approaches to: health and safety, flexible working, and repairs. The Board also discussed the roll out of the UK and Scottish vaccine programme which was now underway.

The Board noted the work that was on-going to dry out the Broxburn properties affected by flooding. The Board considered the impact on those customers who had been temporarily re-housed and asked to be kept informed with progress in relation to reinstatement works.

Decided: The Board noted the update provided.

5. Housing First update (presentation only)

The Board received a presentation covering: overall commitment to Housing First; the national and local picture; our contribution to date; tenancy sustainment levels; and our planned next steps. The Board welcomed the presentation and the Housing First approach which aims to provide people experiencing homelessness with a safe home and network of support to help them sustain their tenancy. The Board discussed the proposed percentage of allocations to Housing First customers and the balance to be struck through our approach to allocations.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the presentation.

6. Re-provisioning of care accommodation

The Board received a report on the reconfiguration plan for the three shared living services in West Lothian. The Board noted the background to the re-provisioning exercise, which had commenced in 2018 and sought to reconfigure the care model from group living to individual tenancies following feedback from various sources including: customers, Care Inspectorate, commissioners. The Board considered the report and noted the arrangements in place to support customers during the transition.

Decided: The Board noted the progress made on the progression of the reconfiguration delivery plan to date.

7. Group protection update (presentation only)

The Board received a presentation with an update on each of the streams in our overall group protection framework. The Board welcomed the update and thanked the Group Protection team for the valuable work to support customers who find themselves in challenging circumstances. The Board also noted the support network in place for the staff who provide the service.

Decided: The Board noted the contents of the presentation.

8. Model complaint handling procedure

The Board received a report on the new model complaint handling procedures published by the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman. The Board was informed about the plans we had to implement the key changes, including the roll out of mandatory training for staff, changes required to performance indicators and IT system.

The Board welcomed the report and the changes we intended to make to help ensure that we continue to gain as much customer insight and learning from complaints as we can.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Noted the new SPSO guidance is mandatory from April 2021 and the plans in place to implement the guidance in WLHP; and**
- 2) Noted we plan to adopt all 6 of the SPSO performance measures.**

9. 2021/22 UK and Scottish Government Budget update

The Board received an update on the 2021/22 UK and Scottish Government Budget announcements and the implications for WLHP. The Board considered the contents of the report including Extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit, Taxation and UK funding support.

Decided: The Board noted update.

10a. 2021/22 Budget

The Board received a detailed report on the 2021/22 budget which had been developed following the approval of the five-year financial projections in February. The Board reviewed the key variances between the financial projections and scrutinised repairs and maintenance costs, noting the £280k increase on the 2020/21 forecast which was as a result of (i) 2020/21 repairs spend being reduced due to the pandemic and (ii) additional provision linked to new build properties.

Decided: The Board approved the 2021/22 Budget.

10b. Finance Report for the period to 28 February 2021

The Board received an overview of the management accounts for the period to 28 February 2021. The Board reviewed the accounts noting the statutory surplus of £127k to the end of period 11 and the variances against the budget.

The Board also considered the SHAPS pension update and considered the amendments that were required to our loan agreements to facilitate the transfer of Cube properties to GHA and Loretto.

Decided: The Board

- 1) Noted the management accounts for the period to 28 February 2021; and**
- 2) Approved the Amendment letter, Officers Certificate and minute relating to the dissolution of Cube Housing Association provided in Appendix 2.**

[amendment to loan agreement was then formally considered at a single item meeting]

11. 2021 Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The Board received the report and considered the suggested approach to undertaking our customer survey. The Board noted there have been further developments to take into account, in particular: the increase of restrictions in January 2021 and the impact on our service; vaccinations have been approved and are rolling out across Scotland; there is a roadmap towards significant easing of restrictions by the summer.

Decided: The Board agreed the proposed approach to our customer survey for 2021/22.

12a. Assurance update

The Board received the report and the findings of the review that had been carried out. The Board noted the findings which included; Gas safety; PPE Health and Safety; Fire Safety; Arrears Management, NETs PPE; Wheatley Foundation.

Decided: The Board noted the report.

12b. Internal Audit Approach and Plan 2020/21

This Board received the report which provided an update on the Internal Audit approach within the Group's new operating model, and the approved internal audit plan for period to May 2021. The Board discussed the change in approach and move towards unrated reports, which was a general trend in the internal audit sector.

Decided: The Board noted the content of the report.

13. Governance update

The Board received the report and considered the revised Services Agreement, Business Excellence Framework and the revised board reporting template. The Board noted that the Services Agreement and BEF will provide a platform for refining and strengthening our relationship with Wheatley Solutions as well as our regulatory compliance position.

Decided: The Board

- 1) agreed to enter into the Services Agreement with Wheatley Solutions;**
- 2) designated the Managing Director as an Authorised Signatory to execute the Services Agreement; and**
- 3) noted the revised Board reporting template and that it will take effect from April 2021.**

14. AOCB

No other items of business.

I certify that the above minute has been approved as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings.

Signed _____ (Chair)